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Foreign Policy Decision Making in Japan During the Gulf War

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Abstract

The Gulf War (1990–1991) became a watershed event for Japan's foreign policy, testing its readiness to address the challenges of the post-Cold War world. However, one can hardly say that Japan successfully passed this test. Despite substantial pressure from the United States and heated debates in the Diet and beyond it, Japan failed to make any contribution to the resolution of the crisis other than providing financial aid. Neither the plan to send peacekeepers to assist the U.S.-led coalition nor the proposal to dispatch JASDF aircraft for the evacuation of refugees were realized. The only "human contribution" Japan made was sending JMSDF minesweeper vessels to the Persian Gulf, but even this was done after the active phase of the hostilities was over. This severely harmed Japan's image in the world and simultaneously served as stimulus for change, leading to Japan assuming a more active international role from the 1990s on. The present article focuses on the domestic political background of Japan's reaction to the Gulf crisis. It shows how the factors including the political weakness of the prime minister, factional nature of the ruling party, the situation of the "twisted Diet," where the LDP did not control the House of Councillors, as well as political opportunism of the opposition, insufficient support for the government's proposals from public opinion, and the general focus on minor and technical details, rather than strategic foreign policy goals, combined to cause a paralysis of the decision-making mechanism. The study of this historical episode will, among other things, help us to better understand the roots of present-day Japanese foreign policy.

Keywords: foreign policy, decision making process, domestic politics, Gulf War, LDP, National Diet of Japan.

Introduction

The Gulf War, which began with Iraq's invasion of Kuwait on August 2, 1990, went into the active phase as the US-led coalition forces started their military operation on January 17, 1991 (Operation Desert Storm), and ended on February 28, 1991, with Kuwait's liberation from Iraqi occupation, became a watershed event for post-war Japan's diplomacy and security policy.

Japan could not afford to stay away from the conflict. It was not only that the Japan-U.S. alliance, which had been the cornerstone of Tokyo's foreign policy throughout the entire post-war period, forced Japan to show solidarity with the United States. Japan also had vital economic interests in the Middle East region, with as much as 70 percent of Japan's crude oil imports coming from there [Kistanov 1994, p. 6]. Finally, the Gulf War was the first serious crisis of the post-Cold War world, where every country had to redefine its place in the international arena.

However, one can hardly say that Japan successfully passed this test. Japan's reaction to the crisis revealed the inadequacy of its habitual foreign policy mechanisms and their inability to respond to the challenges of the new era. Despite intense debate in the Diet and beyond it, primarily focused on whether various options of Japan's involvement in the situation were acceptable from the point of view of the "pacifist" Article 9 of the Constitution, Japan's ruling circles could not decide on even a symbolic "human contribution" ("*jinteki kōken*"), which meant sending Japanese personnel to the conflict zone to assist the international coalition. Japan's government limited itself to financial assistance and, only after the active hostilities ended, sending Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) minesweeper ships to the Persian Gulf.

Inability to perform what was perceived as Japan's duty before the international community severely harmed the nation's international status. When, in March 1991, the Kuwaiti government published a letter

of thanks to the coalition countries, Japan was not even mentioned there, despite Japan's financial contribution exceeding that of any other country save for the U.S. and Kuwait, amounting to 13 billion USD [Nakamura 2005, p. 210]. Another example thereof is that, after the war was over, the Japanese Foreign Minister Nakayama Tarō was not even invited to a summit in Washington, unlike his European counterparts [Purrington 1992, p. 169].

It was the unsuccessful experience of reacting to the Gulf War that stimulated further transformation of Japan's foreign policy mechanism. The fact that, as early as in June 1992, the Diet adopted the International Peace Cooperation Law and amended the JSDF Law, making it possible for the Japanese armed forces to participate in UN peacekeeping operations, even if with some serious restrictions, showed that Japanese diplomacy started to adapt to the world after the Cold War.

Therefore, a study of the way Japan's foreign policy decision making apparatus reacted to this crisis is an important task, which will, among other things, help us to better understand the roots of present-day Japanese foreign policy.

Domestic Political Situation in Japan Before the Gulf War

One of the reasons for the half-hearted response of Japan to the Gulf War was the crumbling power of the Liberal Democratic Party, the dominant political force since the mid-1950s. The negative impact of several corruption scandals, as well as the general tiredness of voters from the almost four-decade-long rule of the LDP became clear in 1989, when the ruling party lost control over the House of Councillors for the first time, even while remaining dominant in the more powerful House of Representatives. Facing this "twisted Diet" situation, the Liberal Democrats had, for the first time, to seriously negotiate with opposition parties. Under these conditions, Kaifu Toshiki, who became prime minister on August 10, 1989, was meant to use his image of a "clean politician" to support the falling popularity of the ruling party [Pavlenko 2006, p. 63].

Lacking his own power base within the party, Kaifu depended on influential faction leaders and was quite limited in pursuing an independent course. As will be shown below, this often led to substantial controversies between the prime minister, on the one hand, and party leadership (in particular, the LDP Secretary General Ozawa Ichirō and the LDP General Affairs Committee Chairman Nishioka Takeo), on the other [Inoguchi 1991b, p. 188–189].

There were also other factors complicating the situation of the new prime minister. Kaifu's experience in the field of foreign policy was quite limited, as his previous Cabinet experience was limited to the posts of Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary in 1974–1976 and Minister of Education in 1976–1977 and 1985–1986. Besides, unlike, for example, Nakasone Yasuhiro, Prime Minister in 1982–1987, Kaifu lacked his own staff of advisors, who he could turn to for assistance regarding issues of foreign policy and national security, and so he had to rely on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Meanwhile, the idea of participating in UN peacekeeping activities was not completely foreign to Japanese policymakers long before the Gulf War. In 1966, Japanese newspapers reported that the government prepared draft legislation regulating Japan's participation in UN peacekeeping missions. Officials later denied the existence of this document but acknowledged that the issue had been studied. Later, in 1982, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs asked a group of experts to consider the same problem, which resulted in a report containing proposals for the participation of Japanese personnel in peacekeeping operations, even though it did not provide for JSDF service members' participation in such missions [Shibata 1994, p. 309].

These issues drew particular attention towards the end of the 1980s, as exemplified by the International Cooperation Initiative (*Kokusai kyōryoku kōsō*), announced by Prime Minister Takeshita Noboru in London in May 1989.[1] Takeshita mentioned "active participation

[1] Kokusai bunka kōryū no ayumi: Takeshita sōridaijin Rondon supīchi [The Progress of International Cultural Cooperation: London Speech

in diplomatic cooperation for conflict resolution" and "personnel dispatchment," and even though this only meant the deployment of civilian specialists, it was nevertheless a substantial step forward for Japan. However, these plans did not see full realization. There were indeed cases of Japan dispatching small groups of civilian specialists, but this was done on a very small scale. For example, Japan dispatched small groups of observers for election monitoring within the UN operations in Namibia and Nicaragua, numbering 27 and 6 people respectively.[2] And even though Prime Minister Kaifu mentioned the International Cooperation Initiative in his speeches, up until the beginning of the Gulf crisis in summer 1990, he usually focused on the economic and humanitarian aspects of this plan.

Not only did the government's attitude towards Japan's desirable role in the international arena evolve, but the views of other political forces were changing as well. Most opposition parties (excluding the Communists), and even the Japan Socialist Party (JSP), which remained the second largest force in the Diet after the LDP, essentially accepted or, at the very least, were close to accepting the existence of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty and the JSDF. Meanwhile, as Japanese political scientist Inoguchi Takashi notes, by the early 1990s, there were two close and partially overlapping groups in Japanese politics who were in favor of a more active foreign policy. On the one hand, there were those who supported a more internationally active Japan in tandem with the United States. The supporters of this view included the LDP Secretary General Ozawa Ichirō, the Diet members belonging to the defense "clan" (*zoku*), as well as the Defense Agency and the private companies benefitting from

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by PM Takeshita]. May 4, 1989. https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/culture/koryu/others/kokusai_3a.html

[2] Dai 4 setsu. Kokurentō no kokusaikikan no yakuwari to wagakuni no kyōryoku [Section 4. The Role of UN and Other International Organizations and Japan's Cooperation With Them]. Gaikō seisho 1990 [Diplomatic Bluebook 1990]. https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/bluebook/1990/h02-2-4.htm

defense contracts. On the other hand, there were those who, while not insisting on a complete breakup with Washington, nevertheless spoke in favor of a more independent foreign policy. According to Inoguchi, this camp included some large corporations (in particular, in the finance sector), as well as the "economic" ministries, particularly the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of International Trade and Industry. Among the Foreign Ministry officials, there were both supporters of a more active role of Japan and those who deemed it necessary to stick to a more cautious course, with the latter ones being more influential in practice [Inoguchi 1991a, p. 268–271].

Foreign Policy Decision Making During the Gulf War

The news of Iraq's attack on Kuwait on August 2, 1990, became a surprise for Japan, which did not have sufficient political and intelligence presence in the region [Ibid., p. 257–258]. Nevertheless, economic measures were taken by Tokyo quite swiftly. On August 5, Chief Cabinet Secretary Sakamoto Misoji presented a statement which contained harsh condemnation of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, called on Iraq to immediately fulfill the terms of the August 2 UN Security Council Resolution 660, which demanded that Iraq immediately withdrew its forces from Kuwait, and also introduced economic sanctions against Iraq.

It is hard to say whether this decisiveness was caused more by Washington's insistence or by Tokyo's own initiative. It is known that, on August 4, there was a telephone call between Prime Minister Kaifu and U.S. President George Bush, with Bush stressing the importance of the international community's joint actions to restore the legitimate government of Kuwait [Orita 2013, p. 123]. At any rate, the Japanese government was even ahead of the UN Security Council, which only adopted its own resolution on economic sanctions a day later, on August 6.

Still, even in the first days of the crisis, there started to appear first disagreements between various agencies. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the position of which turned out to be the dominant one at this

stage, supported solidarity with the United States, while the Ministry of International Trade and Industry, fearing for the fate of the 600 billion yen Iraq was owing to Japanese trade companies, was initially more cautious, believing that Japan had to wait until Western European countries formulated their response [Purrington 1991, p. 308].

Tokyo was, in principle, ready to provide financial aid to the regional countries and the U.S.-led coalition, but the discussion about the more decisive measures, primarily focusing on Japan's "human contribution," turned out to be extremely difficult even despite substantial pressure from Washington. On August 14, President Bush once again called Prime Minister Kaifu, urging his colleague to dispatch Japanese personnel to the conflict zone to assist with clearing the waters of mines and delivering humanitarian aid. The Japanese prime minister, however, gave no affirmative answer, mentioning legal and political difficulties such steps would be accompanied with [Orita 2013, p. 125].

As the government was hesitant to react to Washington's calls for aid, the LDP politicians who supported a more active national security policy took the lead. One of these "hawks" was the LDP Secretary General Ozawa Ichirō. On August 26, 1990, Ozawa met with Kaifu, trying to persuade him to send a JSDF force to the Middle East, claiming that it could be done within the existing legal framework, but the prime minister turned down these proposals [Shoji 2011, p. 208].

Three days later, on August 29, the government announced the measures Japan promised to take to help in resolving the crisis. It was said that Japan would provide financial assistance, the amount and specific forms of which were to be announced later. It was also stated that Japan was going to make a "human contribution" by providing civilian vessels and aircraft to deliver food and medical supplies, and also by dispatching a medical team of approximately 100 people.[3] Later, however, it turned

[3] Wangan kiki ni kansuru siryō, chūtō ni okeru heiwa fukkatsu ni kakawaru wagakuni no kokensaku [Materials on the Gulf Crisis, the contribution to be made by Japan related to the restoration of peace in the Middle East]. August 29, 1990. https://worldjpn.net/documents/texts/JPME/19900829.O2J.html

out that the promises to dispatch medics and transport vessels could not be fulfilled, as there were no organizations or private persons in Japan ready to perform this mission [Orita 2013, p. 126].

Kaifu stressed that these measures would be taken in strict accordance with Japanese constitutional norms. He said, however, that, in order to provide a more effective contribution to peace, Japan should consider amending its laws – again, within the framework of the constitution. He suggested that Japan could pass the "United Nations Peace Cooperation Bill," which would stipulate the conditions under which Japan could provide its "human contribution."[4] The initial reaction of the United States to these proposals was lukewarm, and the next day the government announced that the total amount of Japan's aid was to amount to 1 billion USD.

Meanwhile, the position of the prime minister, who decided to provide this amount of aid, was not coordinated not only with the United States, but even with the Japanese Foreign Ministry. According to the then-Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Ishihara Nobuo, the Foreign Ministry initially reported to the prime minister that the initial amount of aid Japan had to provide to the coalition was in the range of 2 to 3 billion USD. On the other hand, the Ministry of Finance disagreed with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and recommended to provide only 1 billion USD – the amount announced by the government on August 30 [Shoji 2011, p. 208–209].

The Japanese public deemed these measures adequate. According to a Kyodo poll conducted after the details of the first aid package were announced, 59 percent of respondents stated that they were satisfied with Japan's contribution to the resolution of the crisis, 22 percent believed it excessive, and only 16 percent said that the government's actions were insufficient. However, the sort of "human contribution"

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4 Wangan kiki ni kansuru shiryō, kisha kaiken ni okeru Kaifu naikaku sōri daijin hatsugen yōshi [Materials on the Gulf Crisis, main contents of the statement by Prime Minister Kaifu]. August 29, 1990. https://worldjpn.net/documents/texts/JPME/19900829.O1J.html

which was expected by Washington remained unacceptable for most Japanese: according to the same poll, 83 percent of respondents were against sending JSDF troops to the Gulf region [Purrington 1991, p. 309].

The United States still believed that Japan had to do more and so continued to press the Japanese leadership. The U.S. Ambassador to Japan Michael Armacost was lobbying this issue so intensely that, in the Japanese political circles, he was dubbed "*Misutā Gaiatsu*" ("Mr. External Pressure") [Nakanishi 2011]. Besides, to provide additional clarifications about the U.S. demands, the U.S. Minister of Finance Nicholas Brady arrived in Tokyo and met with his Japanese counterpart Hashimoto Ryūtarō on September 7, 1990. During this meeting, Brady insisted that Japan needed to provide additional 1 billion USD as aid to the coalition and 2 billion USD to help the regional countries. The Japanese Ministry of Finance was not ready to approve such spending, and so Brady had to return to the United States without a definite answer from the Japanese side.

Several days later, the resistance of the Ministry of Finance was overcome, with the pressure from the Foreign Ministry playing a certain role. On September 14, Chief Cabinet Secretary Sakamoto Misoji announced that Japan would provide additional aid amounting to 3 billion USD. The total amount of aid, 4 billion USD, had to be divided equally between emergency aid, provided as long-term low-interest loans to Egypt, Turkey, and Jordan, who suffered economic damage from the Gulf crisis, and aid to the multinational forces (these funds were meant for purchase of "non-lethal" equipment, as using them to purchase weapons and ammunitions could be seen as violation of the "pacifist" Article 9 of the Constitution). Japanese diplomats emphasized that, in most cases, the equipment necessary for the multinational forces would be purchased in the United States [Purrington 1991, p. 310–311].

Therefore, the U.S. demands regarding the provision of additional funds were being satisfied, even if not without resistance from the Ministry of Finance. But Washington kept asking Tokyo not to limit itself to financial aid and to provide "human contribution," which could become a more tangible proof of Japan's willingness to play a more

substantial global role. For example, on September 29, President Bush once again urged Japan to consider sending JSDF personnel to assist the multinational coalition, even if the Japanese troops were not permitted to use force and were limited to providing rear support to the coalition [Nakamura 2005, p. 204].

Nevertheless, the prime minister's proposal to pass the United Nations Peace Cooperation Bill, meant to realize this "human contribution," faced substantial resistance even at the stage of preliminary consultations within the ruling party and the government. The differences focused on the most basic question: whether Japan's "human contribution" involved sending JSDF military personnel, as Washington and the "hawks" within the ruling party insisted (Ozawa Ichirō, for example, claimed that sending troops would not contradict the Japanese Constitution if it is done in accordance with UN decisions), or whether, as the proponents of more pacifist views believed, Japan had to limit itself to sending only civilian personnel, as any dispatch of troops abroad would violate the Constitution [Orita 2013, p. 127]. The situation was further complicated by the fact that, as the then-Administrative Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Kuriyama Takakazu recalls, the Foreign Ministry, which was doing the bulk of work drafting the bill, had very little time. The extraordinary Diet session, where the bill was to be discussed, was slated to begin on October 12, 1990, and so the Foreign Ministry had less than a month to prepare the document [Shoji 2011, p. 210].

A special working group was established on the basis of the United Nations Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to do the technical work of drafting the document. However, given the importance of the issue, it was under constant supervision of the Cabinet and the ruling party. On the Foreign Ministry side, Administrative Deputy Minister Kuriyama was the one responsible for preparing the bill, while, from the Cabinet side, it was Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Ishihara Nobuo [Ibid., p. 210–212]. Besides, in addition to the daily activities of the working group, there were also regular consultations of top government and party leadership held at the Prime Minister's Office. Among others, these consultations included Prime Minister Kaifu, Minister of Foreign

Affairs Nakayama, Minister of Finance Hashimoto, Chief Cabinet Secretary Sakamoto, and also the top leadership of the LDP, the so-called "three party posts" (*tōsan'yaku*) – the LDP Secretary General Ozawa Ichirō, Chairman of the General Affairs Committee Nishioka Takeo, and Chairman of the Political Affairs Committee Katō Mutsuki. We can assume that it was this closed format where the most important decisions about the contents of the future bill were taken.

Prime Minister Kaifu himself initially believed that the Japanese peacekeepers had to be a completely civilian force, similar, for example, to the Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers [Orita 2013, p. 130]. Of the same opinion was the Administrative Deputy Foreign Minister Kuriyama, who believed that Japan had to limit itself to a purely non-military contribution, as dispatchment of military personnel would cause negative reaction both within and outside Japan [Shoji 2011, p. 212]. However, even some top Foreign Ministry officials disagreed. For example, director of the International Treaties Department Yanai Shunji claimed that Japan could also send the JSDF as "human contribution" [Orita 2013, p. 129]. The proponents of this opinion, among whom were also representatives of the Defense Agency, stated that the establishment of a new structure, the members of which could be sent to the Gulf area to assist the international coalition, "from scratch" would take substantial funds and time. And so, they claimed that it would be much more rational to send the JSDF service members, even if they were given some special status for the time of the mission [Shoji 2011, pp. 212–213].

Eventually these arguments, as well as pressure from the United States, seemed to change the minds of those who had believed in the idea of a purely civilian peacekeeping force. On September 14, 1990, speaking at a meeting at the Prime Minister's Office, Kuriyama reported that there were three options: establish a new structure that would have no relation to the JSDF; revise the Self-Defense Forces Law and thus enable a direct deployment of military personnel; or send the JSDF, but change their status for the time of the mission, so that they were no longer military personnel. Kuriyama himself was in favor of the last variant. The prime minister supported him, ordering to develop such scheme, wherein the

dispatched JSDF personnel would leave the armed forces for the time of the deployment and would be sent to the Middle East not as members of the military, but as "Prime Minister's Office staff" (*sōrifu jimukan*). But even this "trade-off" formula met fierce resistance from both the Defense Agency and the "hawks" in the ruling party. One of the arguments against this variant was that the JSDF service members trained to act as a unit, and so, if they participated in a peacekeeping operation individually, they would be unable to function effectively.

Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Ishihara, who was responsible for coordinating the drafting of the bill, had to take this into account. A one-page memorandum prepared by him spoke about establishing a "Cooperation Corps" (*kyōryokutai*), the core of which would be constituted by JSDF service members. They would act as a single unit, even though they would be dispatched under the flag of the "Cooperation Corps." The document also mentioned that they would have a right to the "minimal" use of arms and that it would not be necessary to revise the Self-Defense Forces Law to realize the proposed plan [Ibid., pp. 213–214].

Eventually, taking these opinions into consideration, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs prepared the final draft of the bill, which was approved by the LDP top bodies on October 11, 1990, by the Cabinet on October 16, 1990, and on the same day was submitted to the 119th extraordinary Diet session. According to the final draft, a "Headquarters for United Nations Peace Cooperation" (*Kokusai rengō heiwa kyōryoku hombu*) was to be established at the Prime Minister's Office, headed by prime minister himself. Subject to this body, a "United Nations Peace Cooperation Corps" (*Kokusai rengō heiwa kyōryoku tai*) was to be established, which could be sent abroad for purposes of "peace cooperation." The bill provided for the possibility of dispatching JSDF service members, as well as members of other administrative bodies to the Corps, with the dispatched specialists having a double status of a member of the Corps and an employee of their original organization for the time of this appointment. Besides, the text mentioned that, in the case of necessity, members of the Corps could be equipped with light arms, but they were only to use them in the case

of extreme necessity and only for defensive purposes [Wangan sensō 1991, pp. 213–223].

As the Foreign Ministry was finalizing the bill, the Prime Minister's Office started to work with opposition parties, trying to secure their support – this was a necessary step given the "twisted Diet" situation. For example, Chief Cabinet Secretary Sakamoto tried to woo the Komeito Party. As the JSP was strictly against the government's plans, it was Komeito who could help to pass the bill in the House of Councillors. But the government's hopes were not realized. On September 27, Komeito Secretary General Ichikawa Yuichi said that his party could not support the government's bill, saying that such provisions as dispatching whole units or the possibility of combining the status of a peacekeeping force member with that of the JSDF member were paving the way for full-scale dispatchments of military forces abroad [Shoji 2011, p. 217]. Eventually Komeito proposed amendments to the bill that would put time limits on it, but this time the Foreign Ministry was unwilling to accept them, as it was planned that the bill would become the basis for a system that would let Japan participate in UN peacekeeping in a swift and effective way in the future [Ibid., p. 220–221].

The JSP also opposed the bill proposed by the government. It insisted that Japan refrained from providing help to the international forces, limiting itself to dispatching civilian specialists. The Socialists prepared an alternative document, which was published on October 15 and titled "Guidelines for Establishing the United Nations Peace Cooperation Mechanism" ("*Kokuren heiwa kyōryoku kikō" setchi taikō*). This provided for the establishment of a purely civilian and unarmed organization, which could perform such functions as truce monitoring, rescue operations, and evacuation of refugees. Even though the JSP proposal did not specify the connection between this structure and the JSDF, Yamaguchi Tsuruo, the party's secretary general, stressed that the JSDF servicepersons would only be able to participate in it after they left the military.[5]

[5] Nihon Keizai Shinbun. 16.10.1990, Morning Issue. P. 2.

As one might have expected, the Communists' reaction to the draft bill proposed by the government was negative as well. In his speech in the House of Representatives on October 17, 1990, the JCP Chairman Fuwa Tetsuzō stressed that Communists believed that the very existence of the JSDF, in principle, contradicts the Constitution, and so demanded not only that the "dangerous bill" be abandoned, but that the very attitude of Japan towards the U.S.-led coalition be revised.

Even the chairman of the center-left Democratic Socialist Party (DSP), Ōuchi Keigo, expressed a cautious position: approving the government's decision to create a force that could be used for peacekeeping without using military force, he still noted that this decision could pave the way for future military operations abroad.[6]

One could easily see how fragile the support for the bill was from the results of the survey conducted by Asahi Shimbun among the House of Representatives members on October 29–30, 1990. According to it, even in the LDP (181 representative out of the 397 surveyed) the support for the bill was not absolute, as only 63,5 percent of the members of the ruling party expressed their approval. And if one excludes those who did so with reservations ("support [the bill] because the party decided so," or "support in the case that amendments are introduced"), then the level of support among the members of the ruling party drops to 49,2 percent. Meanwhile, there was not a single person among the Diet members from the opposition parties (JSP, Komeito, JCP, and DSP) and the independents who supported the bill.

A similar pattern was demonstrated by the responses to another, more abstract question: "Should foreign dispatchment of the JSDF be allowed under the condition of non-use of military force by them?" Only 71,8 percent (130 out of 181 surveyed) of the LDP Diet members answered in the affirmative, and 20,4 percent (37 people) in the negative. Among the opposition, only the majority of the DSP representatives supported

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6 Dai 119 kai kokkai. Shūgiin. Honkaigi. Dai 3 gō [Diet session 119. House of Representatives. Plenary session. Meeting No. 3]. 17.10.1990. http://kokkai.ndl.go.jp/SENTAKU/syugiin/119/0001/11910170001003a.html

this view, while most or all of the Diet members from the JSP, Komeito, and the JCP, as well as the independents, once again gave a negative answer [Wangan Sensō 1991, p. 197–199].

This lack of support from the opposition parties was, to a large extent, the direct consequence of the hurry with which the Foreign Ministry, which was drafting the bill, had to act. During the brief time assigned to the preparation of the United Nations Peace Cooperation Bill, it was difficult to conduct the necessary preparatory work (*nemawashi*, or "going around the roots") even within the Foreign Ministry itself and with the key forces in the ruling party. The consultations with the opposition parties were postponed until after the opening of the Diet session, which defined the critical position these parties took when the bill was introduced [Shoji 2011, pp. 220].

The hurry in preparing the bill led to the Cabinet members giving inconsistent and contradictory answers during the discussions in the Diet, which, naturally, aroused suspicions on the part of the opposition, the public, and even some members of the ruling party. For example, Prime Minister Kaifu and head of the Cabinet Legislation Bureau Kudo Atsuo, replying to the inquiries of the opposition Diet members, essentially confirmed that the Self-Defense Forces' participation in the multinational coalition is forbidden according to the Constitution if the coalition's actions are "connected to the use of force."[7] The Cabinet representatives could neither formulate what armaments were supposed to be provided to the "unarmed" corps, neither explain whether its members could defend themselves when attacked [Purrington 1991, p. 313].

The proposed plan's lack of support from the public also played its role. According to a survey conducted by Asahi Shimbun in November 1990, 78 percent of respondents opposed the deployment of the JSDF

[7] Dai 119 kai kokkai. Shūgiin. Kokusai rengō heiwa kyōryoku ni kansuru Tokubetsu iinkai. Dai 2 gō [Diet session 119. House of Representatives. Special Committee on United Nations Peace Cooperation. Meeting No. 2]. 24.10.1990. http://kokkai.ndl.go.jp/SENTAKU/syugiin/119/0730/11910240730002a.html

abroad, while only 15 percent supported the idea. More than a half of respondents, 58 percent, were against the government-backed United Nations Peace Cooperation Bill. This delivered a heavy blow to the Kaifu Cabinet's popularity as well: according to another poll, its popularity rating, which had remained at the level of more than 50 percent before that, fell to 33 percent [Shoji 2011, p. 221].

At the same time, one must admit that public opinion was also frequently self-contradictory. A large percentage of the Japanese believed that the "checkbook diplomacy" conducted by the government was insufficient, but they were against sending the JSDF abroad [Purrington 1991, p. 319]. Given such mixed signals from the voters, the Cabinet's inconsistency seems quite understandable.

There were also those who criticized the government for the insufficiency, rather than excessiveness of the measures proposed in the bill. For example, Ito Ken'ichi, a political scientist and former Foreign Ministry official, was one of those who supported the deployment of the JSDF for participation in the international operation. In his article published in the summer of 1991, he accuses JSP Chairperson Doi Takako and other opponents of troop deployment of "emotional demagoguery" and Prime Minister Kaifu – of lack of courage to propose a reinterpretation of the Constitution, calling the entire deliberation process about the United Nations Peace Cooperation Bill "a theological dispute not on the question of "what can we do" but "what can we *not* do?"" [Ito 1991, p. 277–278].

Partly acknowledging the justified nature of the criticism Ito and others directed at the government, as well as the JSP and other adherents of the "state pacifism" principle, one cannot but point out that such adamant views fit in the logic of Japanese politics, where issues of foreign policy often take a back seat to issues of domestic politics. It is not germane whether Doi Takako and others expressed their views sincerely or merely out of political opportunism. Acting within the framework of the Japanese political culture, the opposition grasped the chance to deliver a blow to the government. In this sense, Ito's lamentation that "politics conducted according to public

opinion polls cannot be good politics" [Ibid., p. 280] seems far too idealistic.

Finding itself in such a dire situation, when the bill was insufficiently popular among the public and had no prospects of passing through the opposition-controlled House of Councillors, the government had to admit defeat. On November 5, 1990, at a meeting between Prime Minister Kaifu and LDP Secretary General Ozawa, a decision was taken to withdraw the bill, and on November 8, this decision was approved by the party leadership [Wangan sensō 1991, p. 228]. Komeito and DSP agreed with LDP's proposal to introduce a new bill during the next Diet session, with the condition that the JSDF were to be excluded from the peacekeepers, but this plan was never realized [Purrington 1991, p. 313–314].

The first attempt of Japan to make its "human contribution" thus ended in failure. There was also the urgent issue of Japanese citizens who were in Iraq and Kuwait at the time of the beginning of the war. Numbering 261, they were captured by Iraqi authorities, who intended to use them as "human shield." Eventually, due to efforts of both the Japanese government and individual Japanese politicians (among the negotiators were, for example, former Prime Minister Nakasone Yasuhiro, as well as Inoki Antonio, a former wrestler turned politician). Finally, on December 6, 1990, Saddam Husein ordered to free all hostages, after which the last group of the Japanese returned home.[8]

The Gulf crisis entered a new phase after, on January 15, 1991, the ultimatum set by the UN SC Resolution 678 expired, and on January 17, 1991, the US and their allies began Operation Desert Storm against the Iraqi forces.

On January 17, Prime Minister Kaifu published a statement in which he expressed "decisive support" for the coalition forces' actions, saying that they were "the last means of restoring peace" and promising to provide possible assistance in realizing the UN SC resolutions, citing as

[8] Dai 4 setsu. Hitojichi mondai [Section 4. Problem of Hostages]. Gaikō seisho 1991 [Diplomatic Bluebook 1991]. https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/bluebook/1991/h03-2-4.htm

an example of such assistance aid in organizing evacuation of refugees. He also proclaimed the establishment of the "Headquarters for Measures in Relation to the Persian Gulf Crisis" at the Prime Minister's Office.[9]

The prime minister's words about participation in the evacuation of refugees referred to the plans to send several Japan Air Self-Defense Force (JASDF) transport aircraft to the Middle East for this purpose. The proponents of this idea, which started to be discussed in the ruling party and the government even before the beginning of the active phase of the operation, believed that, unlike the deployment of peacekeepers to the conflict zone, such transport mission would not require adopting new laws or revising existing ones. At the same time, not everyone in the government or in the ruling party was confident about the legal justifiability and practical possibility of this plan. Even the Defense Agency representatives said that, given the recent failure of the UN Peace Cooperation Bill in the Diet, such an operation, which still involved sending troops abroad, would violate democratic norms. Experts also pointed to organizational and technical difficulties such an operation might entail.[10]

The beginning of the active phase of the operation against Iraq also led to the United States demanding additional financial contribution from Japan. On January 20–21, 1991, on the sidelines of the G7 summit in New York, the Japanese Finance Minister Hashimoto and his U.S. counterpart Brady met three times, with the latter asking for additional 9 billion USD. This time, Hashimoto agreed almost immediately, and on January 21, 1991, Prime Minister Kaifu called President Bush to say that Japan was ready to provide this sum [Shoji 2011, p. 210]. Therefore, as of the beginning of 1991, the total amount of aid promised by Japan to the US-led coalition and the Middle Eastern countries amounted to 13 billion USD.

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9 Naikaku sōridaijin danwa [Prime Minister's Speech]. January 17, 1991. Gaikō seisho 1991 [Diplomatic Bluebook 1991]. https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/bluebook/1991/h03-shiryou-5.htm#a10

10 Asahi Shimbun. 17.01.1991, Morning Issue. P. 1.

While the financial aid did not arouse any objections regarding its constitutional permissibility, the government still found it difficult to gain approval for it under the conditions of the "twisted Diet." To secure the approval for the second supplementary budget for FY 1990, which provided for these 9 billion USD of aid, the government had to make several concessions to the opposition. The first such concession was the limitation on the possible uses of these funds. In January 1991, the government officially declared that these funds could only be used for "non-lethal purposes." This caused substantial irritation from the US side, which had to take this into consideration [Kuriyama 2016, p. 409]. The second one focused on the source of these funds: the government abandoned its plans to raise the tobacco tax, instead announcing that corporate taxes would be raised, and budget expenses (including military ones) would be cut. Finally, the third concession involved electoral cooperation: LDP Secretary General Ozawa agreed that the LDP would support Komeito's choice of a mayoral candidate in Tokyo. Support was provided to Isomura Hisanori, former NHK host, which caused a rift between the national and the metropolitan organizations of the LDP, with the latter supporting acting mayor Suzuki Shun'ichi. In April 1991, after the end of the Gulf crisis, it was Suzuki who won the elections, which forced Ozawa Ichirō to assume responsibility and resign from his post of the party secretary general [Purrington 1991, p. 311].

All these political maneuvers required a lot of time, and, as a result, by the time the second supplementary budget for FY1990 was approved on March 6, 1991, the active phase of the Gulf War had already been over. This further eroded the importance of Japan's aid in the eyes of the international community.

As for the plan to send JASDF airplanes for evacuation of refugees, the situation largely repeated what had happened to the UN Peace Cooperation Bill. Just like the failed bill, the government's proposal attracted attacks from the opposition. JSP, JCP, and Komeito were against the proposal, with the JSP chairperson Doi Takao accusing the government of an attempt to push through deployment of troops

abroad, and only DSP expressed cautious support for it.[11] The idea was criticized by some members of the ruling party as well: for example, it was not supported by Miyazawa Kiichi, leader of one of the LDP factions [Purrington 1992, p. 166]. Meanwhile, public opinion was critical even of the plans to issue the additional 9 billion USD, to say nothing of the dispatchment of JASDF aircraft. According to a survey conducted on February 2–3, 1991, only 39 percent of Japanese approved the former measure, and only 33 percent – the latter one.[12] As a result, even though the government indeed issued a decree permitting to use the JSDF airplanes to transport refugees, no specific actions to implement it were taken.

Eventually, Japan could only make its "human contribution" after a ceasefire was announced on February 28, 1991, and the active phase of the war was over. This was done by sending minesweeper vessels of the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) to clear the Persian Gulf of naval mines. The proposal to do it was revealed by the Foreign Ministry on March 13, 1991, with the explanation that it entailed no risk of involving Japan in a conflict. Therefore, even if this operation were carried out by the JSDF, it would cause no objections regarding its constitutional permissibility.[13] It was also stated that the operation was necessary because Japan's providing only financial aid was not sufficiently appreciated by other countries, and also because a large number of Japanese tankers passed through the Persian Gulf, so a dispatchment of Japanese ships there was necessary to provide the security of Japanese sea traffic.

No Diet approval was needed to send JMSDF vessels in times of peace, so there were no insurmountable political difficulties regarding this decision. On April 24, 1991, the Security Council and the

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[11] Dai 120 kai kokkai. Shūgiin. Honkaigi. Dai 5 gō [Diet session 120. House of Representatives. Plenary session. Meeting No. 3]. 18.01.1991. http://kokkai.ndl.go.jp/SENTAKU/syugiin/120/0001/12001180001005a.html

[12] Asahi Shimbun. 14.03.1991, Morning Issue. P. 1.

[13] Ibid.

Cabinet approved the dispatchment of Japanese minesweepers. The government's statement claimed that this decision was based on Article 99 of the JSDF Law, which directly stated that clearing of sea mines was one of the tasks of the JMSDF, and it was stressed that such operations did not constitute "deployment of troops abroad" (*kaigai hahei*) and "use of force".[14] However, this plan did not avoid controversy either. As was the case with the UN Peace Cooperation Bill and the plan to send JASDF airplanes for the evacuation of refugees, this idea attracted criticism from a significant part of the opposition in the Diet (once again, with the exception of the DSP). For example, on April 24, 1991, during a plenary meeting of the House of Representatives, Komeito member Inokuma Jūji claimed that Article 99 of the JSDF Law provided only for the clearing of mines in the territorial waters of Japan itself.[15]

Still, the government's position was further strengthened by the fact that, this time, the public by and large supported this plan. According to a survey conducted on April 21–22, 1991, by Asahi Shimbun, 56 percent of respondents approved the deployment of minesweepers, while only 30 percent were against it.[16] Besides, the idea was supported by several notable representatives of the business community, among them the chairman of Keidanren Hiraiwa Gaishi and the chairman of Nikkeiren Suzuki Eiji. The Japanese companies were worried not only about the safety of sea lines of communication per se, but also about the fact that lack of concrete actions by Japan could undermine its image in the eyes of Middle Eastern countries, thus harming Japan's economic relations with the region.

Finally, on April 26, 1991, six vessels of the JMSDF, including four minesweepers, departed from the port of Yokosuka and, a month later, jointed the ships of eight more countries clearing the Persian Gulf of

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14 Asahi Shimbun. 25.04.1991, Morning Issue. P. 1.

15 Dai 120 kai kokkai. Sangiin. Honkaigi. Dai 21 gō [Diet session 120. House of Councillors. Plenary session. Meeting No. 21]. 24.04.1991. http://kokkai.ndl.go.jp/SENTAKU/sangiin/120/0010/12004240010021a.html

16 Asahi Shimbun. 25.04.1991, Morning Issue. P. 3.

sea mines [Purrington 1992, p. 171–172]. The long-awaited "human contribution" of Japan to the resolution of the Gulf crisis was secured, even if only after the end of its active phase.

Conclusion

Despite the failure of the UN Peace Cooperation Bill and the plan to send JASDF airplanes to evacuate refugees, caused by what was essentially a paralysis of the foreign policy decision making mechanism, the Gulf Crisis became an important step towards a more active role of Japan in the international arena. The International Peace Cooperation Law, adopted by the Diet on June 15, 1992, was largely based on the failed UN Peace Cooperation Bill [Nakamura 2005, p. 200].

The Gulf crisis vividly demonstrated the inadequacy of Japan's crisis management system, which became one of the important reasons for the administrative reform of the 1990s. This also stimulated discussions of constitutional revision, which had remained in the periphery of Japanese politics for several decades.

The entire situation also revealed several notable features of the Japanese foreign policy making mechanism. Contradictions and often trivial disagreements not only between the LDP and the opposition, but also within the ruling party, as well as within the bureaucracy, were a common occurrence. One should also note the emphasis on technical and specific details, often to the detriment of a general and strategic vision of the situation. There were virtually no discussions of the fact that, even should this or that plan (be it the deployment of the Japanese peacekeepers, civilian or composed from JSDF members, or the dispatchment of several JASDF transport planes) come to fruition, Japan's "human contribution" would remain almost purely symbolic and incomparable not only with the role of the United States, but also with what other coalition members did.

At the same time, the real difference between the proposed solutions was not as radical as one might have assumed judging by the intensity of debate. For example, the plan to establish a purely civilian peacekeeping

corps proposed by the Socialists largely repeated what both Prime Minister Kaifu and a part of the Foreign Ministry officials wanted to do before the pressure from the LDP leadership forced them to provide for the participation of JSDF units in the "United Nations Peace Cooperation Corps."

Finally, such episodes as the opposition's willingness to support the additional aid package, but only under the condition that the LDP support their candidate in the Tokyo mayor elections, demonstrates that issues of foreign politics were frequently, from the point of view of Japanese (but, of course, not only Japanese) politicians, nothing but a bargaining chip in the domestic political game, rather than means to achieve strategic foreign policy goals.

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Financial Crises and Financial Contagion in Japan

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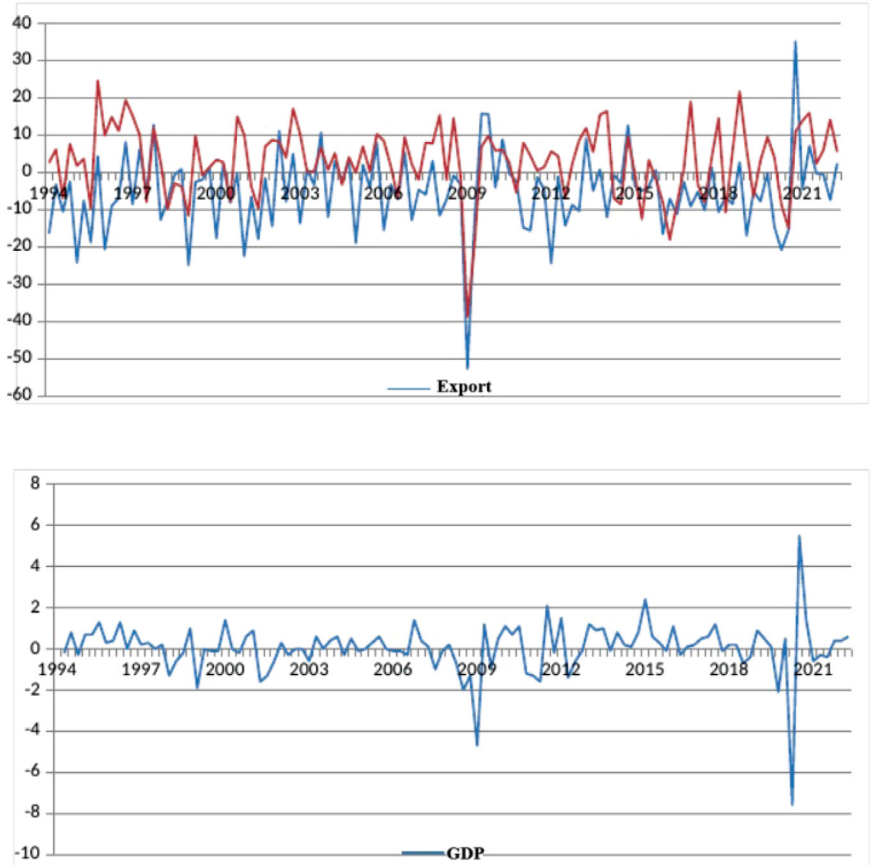

Figure 1. Growth rate of export, import, and GDP in Japan in 1994–2022, percent.

Calculated and compiled as per: Trade Statistics of Japan. https://www.customs.go.jp/toukei/suii/html/time_e.htm; GDP (Expenditure Approach) and Its Components. https://www.esri.cao.go.jp/en/sna/data/sokuhou/files/2022/qe222_2/gdemenuea.html

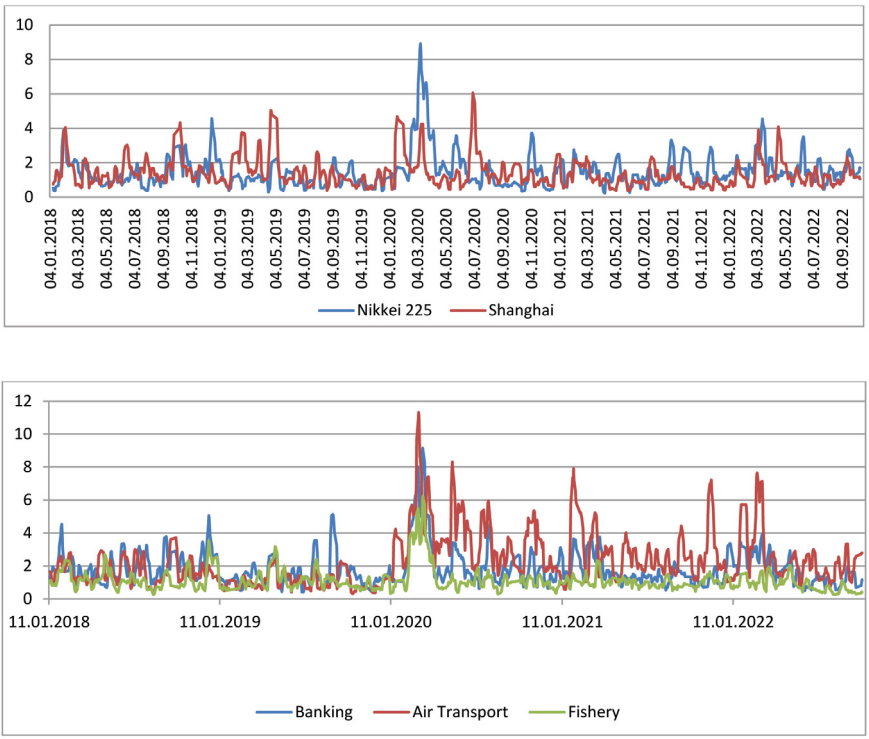

Figure 2. Volatility of country and industry stock indices in the pre-pandemic and pandemic periods, percent.

Calculated according to: World and Sector Indices. https://www.investing.com/indices/world-indices